



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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By: Sgt. Michelle Brown, 134<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment

## **Khaan Quest 2012 opening ceremony demonstrates continued strength of multinational relationships in the Pacific-Region**

**FIVE HILLS TRAINING AREA, Mongolia** – Hundreds of service members and distinguished guests from U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) and surrounding countries gathered for the Khaan Quest 2012 (KQ12) opening ceremony held at the Mongolian Armed Forces Peace Support Center in the vicinity of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on Aug. 12.

Mongolian President Ts. Elbegdorj; Lt. Gen. Ts. Byambajav, chief of general staff, Mongolian Armed Forces; and Lt. Gen. Francis J. Wiercinski, commanding general, U.S. Army Pacific Command, addressed the audience and welcomed those in attendance.

"Welcome to the ancient land of Mongolia," Elbegdorj said. "For the seventh consecutive year, these ancient hills in central Mongolia graciously host the servicemen from peace-loving nations striving together for the cause of peace on our planet."

Khaan Quest 2012 is a combined joint-exercise hosted by the Mongolian Armed Forces in partnership with USARPAC that contributes to enhancing the defense readiness and tactical interoperability of U.S., Mongolian and other international forces in the Pacific region. Approximately 80 Alaska National Guardsmen are slated to participate in KQ12.

"It is delightful that that Khaan Quest has become a symbol of mutual respect among nations in our vast region and a vivid example of how countries can collaborate despite differences in forms of government, social and economic systems," Elbegdorj said.

Khaan Quest is designed to promote regional peace and security while strengthening multinational relations. Participation in this exercise strengthens participants' capabilities in international peacekeeping operations and stability operations worldwide.

"In this new century, our nation actively strives to broaden multilateral cooperation with all countries around the world and safeguard our security through political and diplomatic means," Byambajav said. "Within the context of this policy, the Mongolian Armed Forces takes active part in international peace operations."

Byambajav wished success to all the participants and declared the KQ12 exercise open.

The relationship between the U.S. and Mongolian militaries continues to be one of mutual respect and holds the promise of continued improvement for years to come.

"This year marks the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the United States. The relationship between our two countries has grown and matured over the last quarter century into the valued partnership it is today," Wiercinski said.

KQ12 consists of a battalion-level staff exercise, platoon-level Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Training, Field Training Exercise Lane Training, Military First Responder Training, Engineer Subject Matter Expert Exchange and a Medical Humanitarian Civic Action Outreach Project.

"This is a truly great opportunity for each country to enhance military-to-military relations," Wiercinski said. "You could not ask for a broader representation of professional soldiers from around the world."

KQ12 is slated to host more than 1,000 service members, including approximately 300 U.S. personnel and participants from South Korea, India, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, France, the United Kingdom and Germany. Kazakhstan, Russia and China will also have observers present during the exercise.

Media interested in covering this exercise should contact the exercise public affairs officer, Capt. Amy Slinker, email: [amyslinker@gmail.com](mailto:amyslinker@gmail.com).

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#### **Cutlines:**

##### **120812-Z-PU609-001**

Alaska National Guardsmen march in a pass and review during the Khaan Quest 2012 opening ceremony held at the Mongolian Armed Forces Peace Support Center near Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on Aug. 12. Khaan Quest 2012 is a multinational training exercise focused on peacekeeping operations, co-sponsored by U.S. Army Pacific Command and the Mongolian Armed Forces. Photo: Capt. Amy B. Slinker, 134th Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard

##### **120812-M-XK110-022**

Mongolian President Ts. Elbegdorj accepts a plaque from Alaska National Guard Col. Michael Thompson during the opening ceremony for Exercise Khaan Quest 2012 at the Mongolian Armed Forces Peace Support Center near Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on Aug. 12. Thompson is this year's exercise director. Khaan Quest 2012 is a multinational training exercise focused on peacekeeping operations, co-sponsored by U.S. Army Pacific Command and the Mongolian Armed Forces. Photo: Lance Cpl. Matthew Manning, U.S. Marine Corps

##### **120812-A-MZ867-022**

Mongolian President Ts. Elbegdorj shakes hands with Lt. Gen. Francis J. Wiercinski, commanding general, U.S. Army Pacific Command, upon arrival at the opening ceremony for Khaan Quest 2012 held at the Mongolian Armed Forces Peace Support Center in vicinity of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Aug. 12. Khaan Quest 2012 is a combined joint-exercise hosted by the Mongolian Armed Forces in partnership with USARPAC that contributes to enhancing the defense readiness and tactical interoperability of U.S., Mongolian, and other

international forces in the Pacific region. Photo: Sgt. Michelle Brown, 134th Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard

**120812-A-MZ867-114**

A Mongolian Armed Forces soldier lands during a parachute performance at the Khaan Quest 2012 opening ceremony held at the Mongolian Armed Forces Peace Support Center in vicinity of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, August 12, 2012. Photo: Sgt. Michelle Brown, 134th Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard

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